

CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRY Albania

SUBJECT Conditions in the Albanian Army

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1. In the Albanian Army everything is secret and no one tries to learn more than he thinks he can without arousing suspicion, which is always resolved at the individual's expense.
2. Most of the soldiers do not know to what unit they belong, and often they know only the first, and not the last names of their superiors. The units are always known by a number or designation which is also used in all service communications. Such words or numbers are changed at irregular intervals so that, even in the event of interception, these units would not be identified.
3. The morale of the soldiers is low and they are all tired of serving for so many years. But this does not concern the higher command for several reasons, among which are: (a) the majority of the Albanians have everything to gain by being in the Army, as civilians do not have food rations, which are distributed to the soldiers, who are also clothed by the State; and (b) the officers are all of proven loyalty, and would under no circumstances make common cause with their subordinates against the regime.
4. Accordingly, everyone complains but they all know that it is only by doing military duty that they can improve their standard of living.
5. As regards the quality of training, Albania is reported to have a fairly well-trained army, and its equipment has been improved by the distribution of new Russian arms to replace the pre-war Italian and German ones. Training is very extensive and instructors do not worry if, against health standards, the men are subjected to excessively hard labor and prolonged training. Maintenance and knowledge of weapons are particularly stressed.
6. As for uniforms, the Tirana units are generally well equipped. The same cannot be said for those away from the capital. Soldiers who are sent to the Tirana hospital from the outposts are pitifully dressed in trousers without seats, etc.

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